



## Introduction

**Older adults can be particularly vulnerable during disasters but also possess assets that can contribute to preparedness for shocks.**

This briefing summarises the report, **Resilience in An Ageing Greater Manchester** produced by Ambition for Ageing to feed into the Greater Manchester Resilience Strategy and to help inform future policy interventions.

The work brought existing research together with the findings of a series of focus groups to look into resilience amongst older people in Greater Manchester with a focus on marginalisation.

During the research, we focused on the following marginalised groups:

- Older South Asian Women
- Older men living in a deprived area
- Refugees

This briefing argues that although older people can be particularly vulnerable to shocks, they also may possess assets to prepare themselves and to support others during an emergency.

However, marginalisation and social isolation contribute towards an individual's ability to react during times of shock. To mitigate this risk, it is vital to include a range of marginalised groups in resilience planning.

## Terminology

**Resilience:** The capacity of individuals, communities or institutions to deal with shocks or stresses.

**Social Capital:** The social connections and networks, including relationships and trust, that an individual has.

**Marginalisation:** The disadvantage caused by a societal and institutional response to one or a number of characteristics including, age, gender, class, disability, refugee status and ethnicity.

Ambition for Ageing is a £10.2 million Greater Manchester level programme aimed at creating more age friendly places and empowering people to live fulfilling lives as they age.

We do this by providing small investments to help develop more age-friendly neighbourhoods in Greater Manchester in addition to funding larger scale work across the city-region.

As a research project, we are committed to sharing the learning we gain from the programme to help influence local, regional and national policy.

# Key Findings



“ People like us are often fine. Women like us give each other emotional support and this makes it easier to cope. ”

## Challenges

**1** Older adults can be particularly **vulnerable** during large-scale disasters but **also possess assets** that can contribute to preparedness for shocks.

**2** Older people experience many of the **same feelings and needs** as people of other ages during times of shock, in particular the need to be part of a community and receive reciprocal support.

However, **social inclusion** plays a key part in keeping people resilient, something that is a risk for older people.

**3** Older people with **less social capital** due to experiencing social isolation have the potential to be **impacted more** by shocks and stresses.

**4** Older people with additional marginalising characteristics, such as minority ethnicities, often have **high levels of bonding social capital** (social networks that are built around similarities and reciprocity) but struggle to make **connections outside of their own community** which are beneficial during times of shock.

**5** Many marginalised groups have high personal resilience. However, communities made up of marginalised people often **lack the information and resources** to react adequately during times of shock.

**6** Marginalised older people can be:

- more likely to be **impacted by shocks**
- more likely to experience **social isolation**,
- less likely to have the **resources** to rebuild communities following shocks and
- more likely to be **distant from institutions** and as a result **less likely engage** with planners.

**7** Communities made up of people with **higher levels of bridging social capital** (connections to those outside of a person's own group) are likely to be **more resilient** due to having access to additional information, resources and support.

**8** Areas with **higher levels of community cohesion** and social infrastructure are often **more resilient** than areas with lower levels due to the support communities are able to offer to each other.

**9** Although referred to as different things within different cultures, the personal and cultural belief in the importance of **'grit'** or **'hard graft'** is shared across the working classes across ethnicities.

**This attitude can help boost an individual's resilience.**

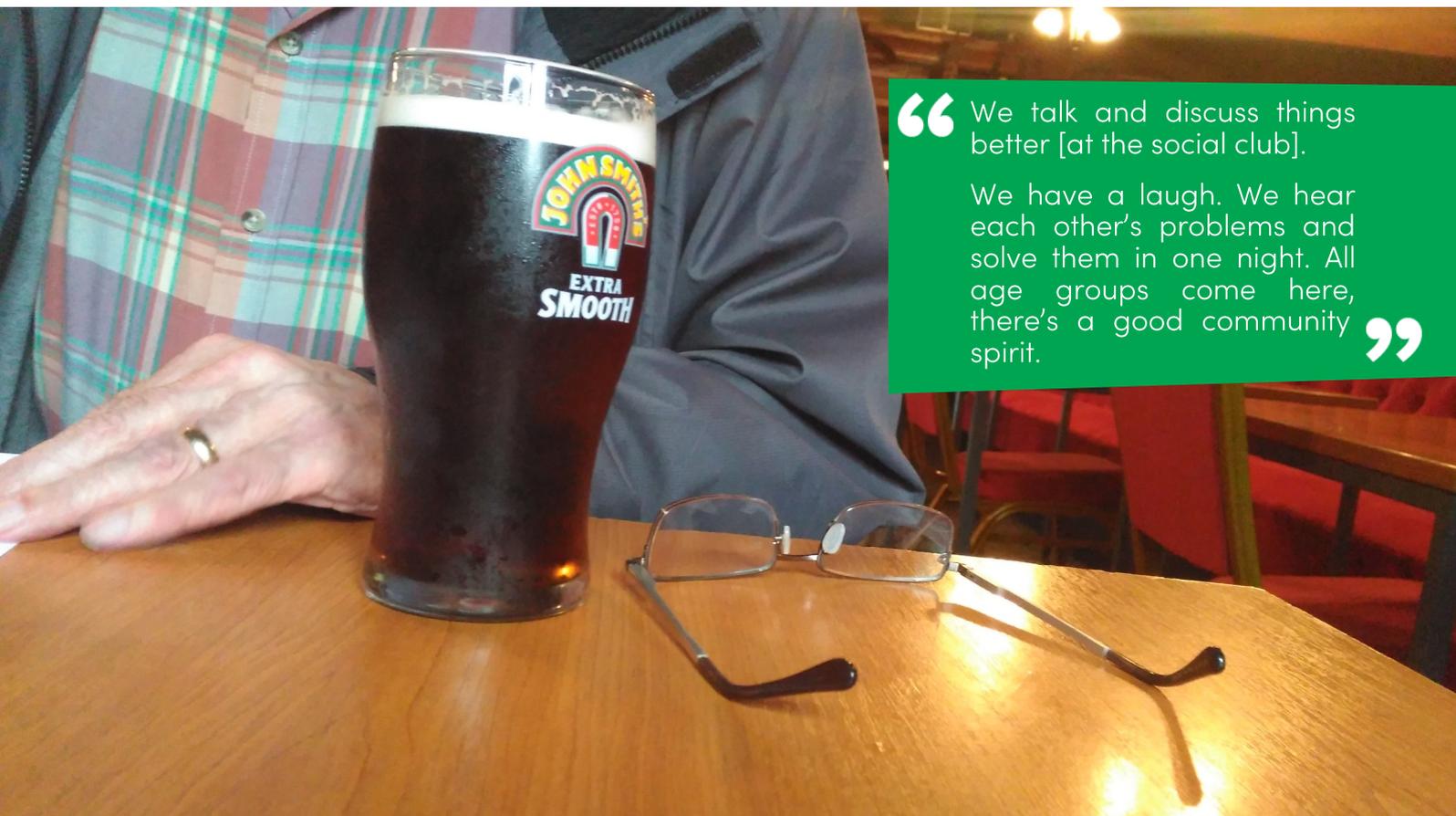
**10** To avoid further marginalising people, it is vital to **include a range of marginalised groups in resilience planning**.

In order to carry this out effectively, it is important to recognise the value of community institutions and bridging organisations and people, such as social clubs or community leaders.

**11** Resilience may be strengthened in cultures that **value and encourage lifelong learning** as this promotes adaptability.

In cultures where wisdom is associated with age, there may be less desire to continue learning, preserving status by not admitting ignorance.

**12** It cannot be assumed that exposure to shocks and stresses, such as **discrimination** in the form of racism or experiencing economic deprivation builds up resilience. There is a risk of negative impacts on older people's wellbeing as **these experiences build up** over a lifetime.



“ We talk and discuss things better [at the social club].

We have a laugh. We hear each other's problems and solve them in one night. All age groups come here, there's a good community spirit.

”

# Further Research

**Due to the scope of this research, there are many areas left unexplored.**

This research focuses on the experiences of only a few of many marginalised groups. Further research could look into the experiences of a number of different marginalised groups such as **older carers, LGBT+ older people or other BAME older people** as examples. Further research has the potential to identify both shared and unique experiences, barriers and strengths of these groups in relation to resilience.

This report just scratches the surface on a number of areas relating to the **experiences of older refugees** that deserve deeper focus. More research is needed into the full experiences of older refugees in relation to resilience.

“ There’s that Northern grit... when something bad happens it usually brings a defiant attitude. Most of the Northern towns have already had that resilience, embedded from the industrial age and grafting. ”

Further research is also needed into the **impact of a lifetime of discrimination on later life transitions**.

Finally, it would be beneficial to explore **cultural narratives and how experiences can be forgotten over time**, yet still stay with individuals.

Within the groups, there were conversations about shocks experienced by all attendees and the impact they had on their resilience. However, these shocks are **not taken into consideration during resilience planning**, due to how long ago they took place.

# Personas



**To illustrate the experiences of some of the many people from marginalised groups, we have developed a number of personas.**

They focus on how certain shocks and stresses disproportionately affect marginalised groups and how approaches to resilience can reduce these factors. These personas are not meant to be representative of every marginalised group, nor representative of all older people with these marginalising characteristics.

The complete personas, are available in the full report **Resilience in An Ageing Greater Manchester** which is available on the Ambition for Ageing website.

To read the complete personas and download the full report visit [www.ambitionforageing.org.uk/resilience](http://www.ambitionforageing.org.uk/resilience)

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